

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

AN ADMIRABLE INTERNATIONAL NOVEL
ON BOTH SIDES. A Novel. By FRANCIS COURTEY
BAYLOR. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company.

The temptations to essay an international novel are many and strong, and divers of more or less reputation have yielded to them, but not always with encouraging results. The truth is that the international novel is an exceedingly difficult kind of work, demanding exceptional powers as well as special preparation. It is not enough to possess a superficial acquaintance with the people, institutions, manners and customs of two countries. It is not enough to have keen and quick observation. It is not enough to have, or fancy one has, a particular gift of mental analysis. In addition to these qualifications a very unusual impatience and breadth of judgment are called for, together with a discriminating faculty and a delicacy of perception quite as rare. A genuine sense of humor and a catholicity of charity by many supposed to be incompatible with true patrician are also indispensable, and therefore it is not surprising that little really satisfactory work of the kind has appeared.

In Miss Baylor's admirable story "On Both Sides" we recognize and welcome a genuine success in this difficult line of enterprise. No such faithful, candid, kindly, brilliant and judicious presentation of English and American types has before been achieved. The characters are not lay-figures, employed to display national characteristics, but living people, each with his or her special idiosyncrasies, self-consistent, natural, and spontaneous. The story seems to have grown on the author rather than to have been thought out in advance of composition, and it is therefore to some extent artistically defective. It is in two parts, the first dealing with the experiences of certain Americans in England, and the second being occupied with the adventures of an English party of travellers in the United States. The plot is slight, but sufficient to provide for the representation of several well-marked types, and these are all drawn with so bold, free yet skillful a hand that they cannot fail of recognition anywhere. The English life described is that of good society—upper middle-class with a touch of aristocracy—and it is delightfully drawn. Of course in any such work there must be some exaggeration, because whoever proposes to describe types must select strongly marked specimens, and so the lights and shadows will be higher and darker than in average circumstances. It is scarcely to be credited that Miss Baylor has not somewhat overcolored her pictures of the amazing British frankness which so inspires the American girls at Cheltenham. Her illustrations, however, seem genuine, and the probability is that she has used rather extreme instances in order to heighten the effect. The differences in the social theory and practice of the two countries, however, brought out clearly and neatly. The marvellously perfect British butler, Watson, who is such a "perfect butler," until he runs off with a quantity of valuable goods and turns out to be the ticket-taker man, is himself a clever enough picture to make the fortune of an ordinary story. But it is in the second part, "On This Side," that Miss Baylor's full strength is exhibited. The English baronet, Sir Robert, is a figure so charmingly drawn, so well fitted out, so life-like and complete in every way, and in his completeness so attractive, that it is impossible not to think of Sir Roger de Coverley in reading of him. He is a portrait of the best kind of modern Englishman, and an excellent type it is, highly educated and accomplished, full of taste for knowledge, indefatigable alike in work and play, void of vanity, simple, courteous, sweet tempered, charitable, generous and manly.

The American side of Sir Robert is a capital piece of Western character drawing. Job Ketchum is overflowing with American vices and peculiarities. He is full of quaint and full-flavored Western expressions, has strong disposition toward defying British social conventions, and certainly appears to least advantage when in this exotic atmosphere. But, after marrying a sweet English girl and taking her to his Western home, he develops into the most lovable of fellows. As the host of Sir Robert and his party he displays a good taste, a hospitality, a large-mindedness, thoroughly entitling him to be styled a gentleman, and by no means the least delicate touch in the book is Sir Robert's prompt and complete appreciation of him and the hearty friendship that springs up between the two.

Then there is Heathcote, the heir of Sir Robert, who has been bred to guard himself constantly against the machinations of match-making parents, and who is in consequence conceited, but capable of amendment. He is a natural if not an attractive character. As for Ramsay, the young Englishman who has been reared like a millionaire and has no future, but comes to America (giving himself five years to make a million) and brings out a most elaborate outfit for the far West, he is a capital sketch. Everybody has known him at some time, and most of us can recall some rather grim stories of their disillusionizing and final collapse. Miss Baylor however, avenges herself on perfidious Albion in her picture of Mrs. Sykes, a middle-aged widow of ample fortune and aristocratic connections, who belonged to the genuinely and accurately defined as "tobacco-trader"; an aggressively clever, well-informed woman, amissibly curious woman; a woman of coarse nature, destitute of tact, and profoundly foolish, who could make herself very agreeable or perfectly miserable, just as she saw fit." She saw fit to make herself "perfectly infallible" all the time she was in America, and the Christian charity and long-suffering dealt out to this detestable creature certainly speak very highly for American manners and forbearance. But with all her odious speeches and acts Mrs. Sykes is a character so genuine and real that the account of her seems almost historical, and there can be no more question as to the fidelity of the drawing than as to the existence of the class of which she is a vivid type.

These are by no means all the interesting *devises à personae*. The American girls, for example, are particularly natural and charming. No character is introduced who has not some new light to throw on the whole picture. The movement of the story is so arranged as to afford room for sketches of life at Washington, with incidental outlines of American politicians, life in the West, in New-York, at Baltimore, at Niagara, and a charming glimpse of an old-fashioned Virginian planter's home, where the manners are those of seventeenth-century England.

All through the travels and adventures of the party the development of national characteristics is carried on, sometimes openly, sometimes subtly. And while there is nowhere a pervading sense of causal impartiality in the book, so general is its tone that there are two thoroughly disagreeable people in it: Mrs. Sykes, and an Anglophile named Sam Bates. The wit of the story is considerable. It is written brilliantly, yet not flimsily. There is an undercurrent of grave thought at intervals apparent, and the reflections are often just and sound. There is assuredly no international bitterness to be distilled from such a book. It sparkles with quiet humor, abounds with graceful and gentle satire, yet is dominated by so cordial a feeling of international amity that only the Mrs. Sykeses can find fault with it.

"On Both Sides" is the best international novel that either side has hitherto produced. It is written by an American woman who really knows both countries, and who has shown that she possesses powers which ought to put her in the front rank of fiction, and which cannot fail to do so if she perseveres.

LITERARY NOTES.

"A More Intrigue" is the title of Thomas Hardy's new novel.

Mr. Robert Buchanan, who is not yet a particularly elderly man, is about to publish his "Recollections of a Literary Career." There will doubtless be what irreverent persons call "some fun" among Mr. Buchanan's contemporaries when this book appears.

Lord Wolesey's "Life and Military Career of Marlborough" is coming from the press in London.

In that series of charming criticisms which Mr. Lang is contributing to "The St. James's Gazette," he has, at least reached the number 1. Number of pulchritudin, combining in all departments from primary to senior, the advantages of school system, with the influence of private classes.

force was yours! It is good, in a day of small and laborious ingenuities, to breathe the free air of your books, and dwell in the company of Dame's men—such trenchermen! Like M. d'Escoffier in "Vingt Ans Apres," like that prisoner of the Bastille, your genius n'est que d'un parti, c'est dans parti du grand air! A writer so fertile, so rapid, so masterly in the case with which he worked could not escape the reproaches of barren envy. Because you overflowed with wit you could not be "serious"; because you created with a word you were not said to scamp your work; because you were never dull, never pedantic, incapable of greed, you were to be censured as desultory, inaccurate and prodigal. A generation suffered to from the chiselled phrase to accumulate "documents" to microscope porings over human baseness, to minute and disgusting records of what in humanity is least human—may readily bring these unregarded and railing accusations. Like one of the great and good-humored Giants of Rabelais, you may hear the murmurs from afar, and smile with disdain. To you, who can assess the world—to you who offer it the fresh air of the battlefield, the battlefield and the sea—the world must always return; escaping cloddish from the boudoirs and the boulevards, from the surgeries and hospitals and dead rooms of M. Daudet and M. Zola and of the wear-some De Goncourt."

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